

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 IO-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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R 231351Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1599

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 12716

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT ET

SUBJECT: DETENTIONS AND PRISONERS

1. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PRINCESS SEBLA DESTA (HAILE SELASSIE'S GRANDDAUGHTER AND SPOUSE EX-MINAG KASSA) WAS CONFINED WITH OTHER MEMBERS ROYAL FAMILY IN WOSSEN SEGED COMPOUND OCTOBER 15. PRINCESS TOLD US SHE WAS EXPECTING ARREST AS EARLY AS LAST WEEK SEPTEMBER.

2. WE HAVE ALSO CONFIRMED ARREST O/A SEPTEMBER 24 OF MOFA V/MIN (PROTOCOL) MERID MENGESHA, WHO APPARENTLY UNDER SUSPICION FOR LIVING SEEMINGLY BEYOND HIS MEANS. SUBJECT REPORTEDLY HAS THREE CHILDREN IN US, TWO OF THEM IN COLLEGE.

3. WE HEAR FROM (AMERICAN) WIFE EX-MININFO TESFAYE BEGRE EGZY THAT HE, MULATTO DEBEBE AND MINASSIE LEMMA WERE RECENTLY TAKEN TO MILITARY COMPOUND ACROSS FROM PRINCESS TSEHAI HOSPITAL. THEY STAYED A WEEK AND, WITH EXCEPTION GEBRE EGZY, WERE THEN RETURNED TO PREVIOUS PLACE OF DETENTION AT FOURTH DIVISION HEADQUARTERS.

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REGIME AT POLICE COMPOUND DESCRIBED AS SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT

OVER THAT GOVERNING DETAINEES AT FOURTH DIVISION, VIZ., NO SEARCHES, FREQUENT WALKS IN GARDEN, POSSIBILITY VISUAL CONTACT WITH RELATIVES (BUT NO CONVERSATION), ETC.

4. IN CONTRAST TO FOREGOING, WELL-PLACED ETHIOPIAN SOURCE (RELATED TO GEN. ABIY ABEBE) TOLD US OCTOBER 23 THAT SAME MILITARY COMPOUND HAD BECOME NOTORIOUS BECAUSE INTERROGATIONS HELD THERE. THIS SOURCE FLATLY ASSERTS THAT KETEMA YIFRU AND ASSEFA DEMISSIE, AMONG OTHERS, CURRENTLY BEING QUESTIONED IN THAT PLACE.

5. SOURCE WHOM WE BELIEVE KNOWLEDGEABLE FURTHER STATES THAT MANY DETAINEES MOVED TO MENELIK PALACE THIS MORNING (OCTOBER 23). DETAINEES BEING HOUSED IN UNSATISFACTORY (BECAUSE "VERY COLD") WAREHOUSE, BUT EMPEROR TO HAVE ADEQUATE QUARTERS IN SPECIAL ENCLOSURE ON PALACE GROUNDS. HE STILL IN FOURTH DIVISION, HOWEVER. JUDGES (FROM ALL MILITARY SERVICES) HAVE BEEN APPOINTED AND ARE IN TOWN. FAMILIES OF TRANSFERRED PRISONERS BEING INFORMED TODAY (AND CROWDS ALREADY GATHERING AT MENELIK PALACE ENTRANCE AS THIS BEING WRITTEN), SO THEY CAN BRING FOOD TO NEW PLACE OF DETENTION.

6. COMMENT: ARMORED FORCE ON MENELIK HILL LOOKS TO BE EVEN LARGER THAN FIRST THOUGHT. MOST OF IT IS BOUND COME FROM THIRD DIVISION. COMMAND AND CONTROL OVER THIS POTENT FORCE IN MID-TOWN ADDIS FROM A DIVISION HERETOFORE RATHER PERIPHERALLY AND SOMEWHAT EQUIVOCALLY ASSOCIATED WITH MILITARY REFORM INITIATIVE IS MATTER OF CONSIDERABLE POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE - - PARTICULARLY IF AND WHEN EMPEROR MOVES BACK INTO "OLD GEBBI" FROM HIS CURRENT QUARTERS. WYMAN

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